

THE MCGILL DAILY

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Hiding from the auditors since 1911

Monday, January 25, 1993

Financial crisis: McGill faces tough year Government to blame, says vice-principal finance

BY FIONA MCCAW
& DAMION STODOLA

McGill vice-principal finance and administration John Armour announced last Wednesday that McGill would have less money than expected this year.

Armour was visibly upset when he made the announcement at last week's Senate meeting. He said that the university was short four million dollars this year, and could expect a worse situation next year.

Armour said that more cuts can be expected as the provincial government tries to cut its deficit.

"It has been indicated to us that the university will not be exempt from the the grant-cutting process," said Armour in an interview after the meeting. According to a Québec government announcement last week, the province's deficit is expected to be over four billion dollars this year.

Armour blamed the provincial government for the university's difficulties, saying that the government broke its promise of increased funding and cut its grant to the university.

Assuming this year's grant is the same as last year's, Armour said that the university could only commit two million dollars to reducing McGill's 74 million dollar accumulated deficit. Because of this McGill will have to revise its repayment plan.

If the provincial grant is cut more, the university will be forced to run up its already enormous deficit further.

Pierre Villeneuve, a press-attaché at the Ministry of Higher Education, would not comment on the 1993-94 budget, claiming the government was still in the process of determining how much money it had.

"The announcement will be made sometime in February or March," said Villeneuve.

Armour said the government's uncertainty is causing problems for McGill.

"Adding to our difficulty is lack of knowledge about what the government is doing," said Armour. The university was not notified of the cuts in the grant money for this year until last June. "We only heard about the possible grant cuts (for next year) in the last few days," said Armour.

Villeneuve said the government is not considering streamlining its budget process to give universities more information when they plan their budgets.

"The government functions on a fiscal year and we have to wait until the government decides how much to allot to education," he said. "We have to wait until the end of the fiscal year."

Villeneuve deflected responsibility to the ministry of finance. "After we write the report, it has to be announced by the minister of finance," he said.

Armour added that apart from the government's statement that tuition will be hiked, the university is in the dark about the schedule for raising students' tuition fees. Armour was also cautious about how much a fee hike would help the university's finances.

Economic recovery won't help

"If there are meaningful increases, it would offset the cost of the grant," said Armour. "But the grant is nine times the size of tuition fee income."

Because of the difference in size, it would take an 18 per cent hike in tuition to compensate for a two per cent cut in the grant.

Villeneuve said he would not speculate on tuition fees. "Habitually, the announcement is not made until the fall."

Armour charged that the provincial government should take some responsibility for McGill's financial plight.

"The deficit was caused by inadequate funding to McGill," said

Armour. According to Armour, the provincial government caused the deficit by deliberately funding McGill less per student than other Québec universities.

Villeneuve dismissed any hope the government would renumerate the university. "McGill's deficit is its own responsibility," he said. Villeneuve also said the government would not give special treatment to McGill.

"The government does not intend to accommodate McGill in this respect.

It's the same for all universities," he said. "Presently, there exists a system for determining how much to fund universities, and universities seem to be fine with the existing system."

When asked if an economic recovery would alleviate McGill's financial woes, Armour was pessimistic.

"I assume it would, but Québec has a major annual deficit, so even with an improved economy, they wouldn't be increasing their spending very much."



Students' Society loses thousands "You're flying by the seat of your pants" — auditor

BY JONATHAN DESBARATS

An auditor's report presented at last Thursday's council meeting revealed that Students' Society lost over \$13 000 last year and is in danger of financial ruin.

"We've seen this situation coming for the last three years, and if you don't start taking our advice now, you may go bankrupt," said Phyllis Heaphy, an auditor from Samson, Bélair, Deloitte and Touche.

Students' Society's loss pales in comparison to the more than \$200 000 they lost in 1991-92, and more than \$150 000 they lost in 1990-91. Students' Society had been borrowing from McGill to cover these losses.

But in November, Students' Society decided to pay off their debt to McGill. To do it, they had to raid their capital reserve — used to buy large items like computers and building renovations — and their scholarship fund. The \$100 000 awards of distinction fund was donated by Coca-Cola and Scott's so that Students' Society could give out scholarships.

Since it was illegal to take money from the scholarship fund, Students' Society had to borrow the money back from McGill to reestablish it and part of the capital reserve.

"We will have to meet with the University at a later time and explain our situation in order to replenish our capital reserves," said

Students' Society vp finance Susan Nickerson.

When all the money is returned to the Society, they will owe McGill \$500 000. Nickerson said the council will have to work out a pay schedule over the next five years in order to repay the university.

But Heaphy noted that McGill will not be as considerate to Students' Society as they have been in the past.

"McGill is getting smarter by charging interest on loans to the SSMU," said Heaphy. "In previous years, the Students' Society has relied on McGill University to bail them out of financial difficulties. But in view of McGill's own financial difficulties, they won't be doing this anymore."

Heaphy also accused council of being careless with their finances. She cited a Sadie's loss of over \$16 000, and the council's slow collection of debts as examples of their haphazard approach to finances. She noted that the Society paid its GST twice last year, a mistake which would have cost them \$50 000 if it had not been spotted by the auditors.

"You're flying by the seat of your pants, you have no idea where you're going or how much money you owe," said Heaphy. "How can you run a \$2 million operation without knowing these things?"

McGill students just finished paying \$12 per year for Students' Society's 1975 bankruptcy in December 1990. In the mid 1970's,

Students' Society was "in trusteeship" — run by the university until a debt repayment plan could be worked out.

Heaphy said that the Society had too many "pots of money," or internal accounts, to be able to manage money properly. Currently, each interest group has their own account with the Society.

The accounts are hard to keep track of because of small \$2 and \$5 transactions. Heaphy suggested that the council re-organize their finances in a list of recommendations delivered to the council.

McGill doesn't have a monopoly on student association financial troubles. The Concordia University Student's Association (CUSA) is facing some of the same difficulties.

Councillors discussed the importance of financial autonomy from the university.

"When your dealing with McGill you don't get financial statements back for at least two months, so it is impossible to keep finances up to date," said Nickerson.

Law rep Christophe Sicking added, "It is crucial that the students society become fully incorporated. As long as we aren't, things will be confusing."

Nickerson claimed that under incorporation, interest groups will become financially autonomous, and will each have their own bank accounts, possibly at the Bank of Nova Scotia.

"We will put in controls to ensure fiscal responsibility," said Nickerson.

This year's Students' Society has already adopted a new accounting system called Accpac. The new system is just getting under way, but according to Nickerson it will help them manage their accounts more responsibly.

Nickerson also pointed to the fact that this is general manager Guy Brisebois's first full year at the Society. Brisebois has an accounting background.

McGill doesn't have a monopoly on student association financial troubles. The Concordia University Student's Association (CUSA) is facing some of the same difficulties.

An audit done by Arthur Anderson and Co. pointed to sloppiness in CUSA's bookkeeping, and stated that CUSA's accounts showed "financial irregularities" and were "vulnerable to fraud". The result was that CUSA's bank froze their accounts and refused them a loan to pay off their accumulated deficit of \$130 000.

Heaphy mentioned CUSA when discussing Students' Society's finances. She said that the opportunity for fraud definitely existed at Students' Society.



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The McGill Volunteer Bureau is hosting a Symposium on Wednesday, Jan. 27th in the Union Ballroom, 10am — 3pm.
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Students object to condo conversions

BY SARAH BOWLES

The city of Montréal plans to lift the 1987 moratorium on condominium conversions which may affect students' ability to find affordable housing near McGill.

Under the proposed plan, those buildings that are fairly new, in decent condition and require little

renovation, will be converted into condominiums.

Chris Wrobel, of the Quebec public interest research group (PIRG), sent a brief to the SSMU which outlines the present problems with student housing in the city. The report forewarns "a potential significant loss of affordable housing to students."

The McGill Ghetto, for example, has been transformed by the influx of young and wealthy yuppies who prefer a downtown address. Students are being pushed further away from the university in order to find affordable housing.

A downpayment of \$60 000 to \$120 000 is needed to buy a condo, an impossible amount of money for students to pay.

Wrobel explained the city's rationale for lifting the moratorium. "The city now says that conversions will generate more tax revenue and attract people back to the city to fill the vacant apartments. But buying a condo isn't going to generate any governmental sales tax, and buyers of condos are going to receive a municipal tax credit of \$250 for five years."

The city of Montreal estimates that 15 000 rental units will be converted in five years.

At a meeting last week, Students' Council approved a motion to join

other tenants' rights groups and housing activists in the fight against the proposed lifting of the moratorium on the conversion of rental housing to condominiums. Students' Society plans to circulate a petition among students opposing the lifting of the ban against conversions.

Wrobel encourages students to challenge rent increases.

"Ask for a statement listing the cost of rent for the previous tenant in the past twelve months. You should also be told what renovations have been made. If you think that the increase is unjustified, complain to the Regie," he said.

If the rent of a unit is raised above the average for a similar unit, by at least 15 per cent, then the landlord is legally permitted to convert it to a condominium.

A report by Project Genesis done in the mid-eighties stated that the percentage of people interested in purchasing condos was only 4 per

cent.

The report said that "getting rid of affordable housing isn't going to attract people from the suburbs. They've got families and like the cleaner and quieter areas. If the city really wants to come up with more money to finance its services, they should realize who uses them. People from the suburbs work here and use city services, but don't pay anything for them. It's not going to help to make students move out as well."

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If rent is raised above the average for a similar unit, by at least 15 per cent, then the landlord qualifies to be able to convert the unit.

Residence fees are goin' up!

BY JONATHAN DESBARATS

Student representatives spoke out against an increase in residence fees at a meeting of the University Residence Council last Monday.

Some students claim the rising cost of residence isn't reflected in better living conditions.

"Almost all the hall presidents agree that student residence is becoming too expensive, and food isn't improving," said Tim Wu, president of Douglas Hall.

The administration proposed the increase in fees last October. According to Florence Tracy, Director of Residence, the hikes are necessary to maintain and improve residence services.

"The buildings are in better shape, and the food plan is better," she said. She cited a new hot chocolate machine as proof that services are improving.

Arnold Kwok, an SSMU representative to the residences sub-committee is working on a counter-proposal to challenge the price

hikes. "Hopefully with the new proposal, students will have a common goal," Kwok said.

"We may suggest some changes in spending and business operations," he said.

Wu said that student representatives did not get a fair chance to suggest alternatives to the residence fee-hikes.

Tracy admitted that detailed budget information had not been presented to the students, and said she would take that into account in future relations with the students.

The URC is an advisory body composed of 6 hall presidents, the president of the Residence Council (IRC) and 6 residence directors. The students have the edge in the vote, but Florence Tracy makes the final decision.

"The IRC is run like a rubber stamp committee," said Wu. "As soon as there was any opposition to the hikes by the students, Florence Tracy insinuated that the students had no control over the outcome," he said.

Councillors at odds over athletics funding

BY JONATHAN DESBARATS

Athletics rep James Stewart blasted Students' Society president Jason Prince at Thursday's Students' Council meeting for recommending cuts to intercollegiate sports teams' travel expenses.

Prince made the recommendations to financial arm of the Committee for the Co-ordination of Student Services (CCSS), a committee which advises the Dean of Students as to how to spend the student services budget.

"The president is barking up the wrong tree by taking this proposal to the CCSS without consulting any members of council," said Stewart. "Cutting athletics breaks the morale of the university, and I'm appalled the president would make such a recommendation."

Prince admitted to making the proposal, but stressed the proposal represented his opinion, and not the opinion of the Students' Society. Prince said that half the student services budget goes towards athletics, and that some areas could be cut to avoid increases in student services fees.

"Intercollegiate sports are a vital part of our school, but travel takes up one third of the money

allotted to athletics," he said. Prince suggested that cutting funding in athletics could force alumni and corporations to cough up for travel in athletics.

The argument turned on Stewart when members of council demanded to know what was going on with the athletics complex.

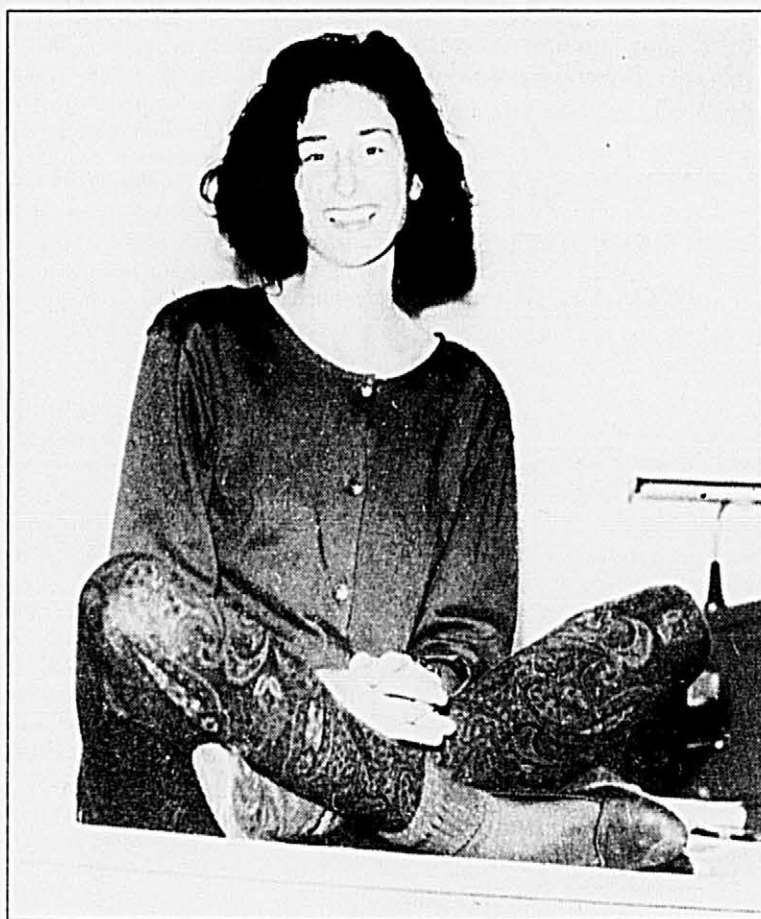
"When is the complex going to be done, why is there no money left, and why has no one reported the state of delay?" said Christoph Sicking, law rep. Sicking mentioned the lack of funding for phase two of the construction of a new athletics complex.

According to Stewart, the project has been delayed because of inflation, and protest groups which have stalled construction. There will be a meeting on February 3 to decide if phase two will go ahead.

"The good news is that phase one which is the construction of the pool will be done in March so that we can all get our toes wet at the appropriate time," said Stewart.

The university overbudgets in the area of travel in case teams make the playoffs. Prince suggested that the university find sources other than student services fees to fund play-off travel expenses.

Grad students get new leave policy



Tamara Myers, president of PGSS

BY KATIE PICKLES

McGill graduate students can now officially take a leave of absence for up to a year for parenting or health reasons. The policy was approved in Senate Wednesday, but has been used in the graduate faculty for most of this year.

Students taking a leave of absence will have access to their supervisor and library facilities without having to pay tuition fees, and a 'K' will appear on their transcripts. The number of years spent in the graduate program which appears on the transcript will not include time spent on leave.

"Now graduate students will no longer be penalized for taking leave. This policy means that the university environment will become friendlier to those with family responsibilities," said Tamara Myers, president of the McGill post-graduate students' society. "It makes the university aware that its constituents are not all single young people."

The policy will enable students funded under government programs to have more flexibility. The two major federal agencies providing funding for graduate students, The National Science and Engineering Re-

search Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), already have provisions for students to take leaves of absence, suspending their scholarships until they return to school.

Myers said that Graduate Students who need to take leave will be able to take the year off without their "funding clock ticking". "Grants at McGill are only available for Ph.D. year one to four, so losing a year can considerably shrink funding opportunities," she said.

The policy will allow for both male and female parenting leave.

Charlotte Legare, Manager of the Graduate Faculty, works on approving the leaves.

"There have been no requests from men so far. But the policy is there and parenting is part of that policy. If there is a justifiable case we will go along with it."

Jennifer Towell, Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Studies, said it has taken the governing bodies of McGill an entire year to approve the policy, because of bureaucratic details.

But according to Legare, the Faculty of Graduate Studies unofficially used a version of the policy, minus the access to library facilities, for over a year. She believes that up until now the students who want leave have been receiving it.

Legare estimates that last year there were eight students who went on parenting leave.

Much of the responsibility for granting leaves of absence to students is left to the individual departments, rather than the faculty office.

"The department supervisor and chair of the student recommend the case to our office," said Legare. "If the case has departmental recommendation we often don't see the person. We are mainly concerned with keeping up to track with the student's record, and knowing when they are coming back."

Leaves for parenting and sickness reasons require a doctor's certificate. The length of each leave is to be decided individually, by the student's department.

"I think that it's a good policy," said graduate student Patty Gonias. "But McGill is so decentralized that the supervisor has unfair control. I know a master's student who became pregnant half-way through her studies and was being pressured by her supervisor to sign a weird contract stating that she'd return to finish."

THE MCGILL DAILY

comment

Students and low-income tenants unite!

Believe it or not, McGill students have found something in common with low-income tenants of Montréal. This is a break from the past, for McGill students have never been well known for their solidarity with the proletariat of this city.

Housing, particularly rental housing, is something that students and low-income earners in Montréal have in common. As rent goes up, our income doesn't, and more and more of our budget is taken up by paying for the place we live.

In 1987, Montréal tried to do something to protect low-income tenants from scum-sucking-fart-catching landlords trying to make a fast buck by converting their rental units into condominiums.

Condo conversions have a two-fold negative effect for rental tenants: Firstly, tenants who can't afford to pay \$120 000 to buy their own house could be forced out of their home so that yuppies could come and buy the place. Secondly, as the stock of rental housing goes down, more and more pressure would be placed on existing rental units that would force rent up.

Since most students don't have \$120 000 on hand to buy a condo, students have a particular interest in seeing that rents don't skyrocket the way they have in Toronto and Vancouver.

City council under the auspices of the ruling Montréal Citizens' Movement (MCM) has proposed lifting the ban, claiming that with the excess of rental units in the city, more condos would make good economic sense.

Last Thursday, McGill's Students' Society voted to oppose the lifting of the ban. A good move.

The MCM proposal (besides breaking a 1990 election promise), has a number of flaws.

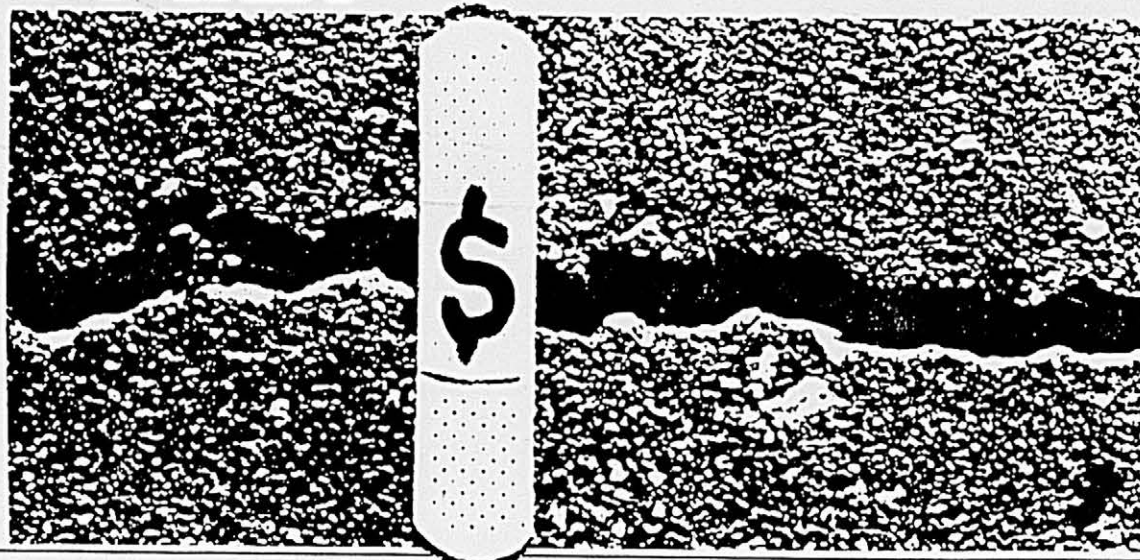
To claim that there is an excess of rental units is a bit misleading. There is no excess of rental units downtown and near McGill. And anyone looking for a place near the university can see that rent has already gone through the roof.

It is also the downtown area that is most targeted for condo developers. So if this lift on the ban goes through, the stock of cheap housing will decrease. Students who are trying to find a place will be limited with the choice of buying a condo if they want to live near the university, or moving farther and farther away, say in like, Val d'Or.

In solidarity with the overwhelming numbers of students presently residing in downtown Montreal, we applaud the McGill Students' Society for opposing the lifting of the ban.

Students at McGill can show they care about the community in which they live by supporting low-income tenant groups to protest city council's initiative.

Dave Ley
Kathy Bunka



... letters

a matter of any importance; in fact, quite apart from this business of "stealing" ideas from each other, most of the students who show up at my conferences do so because they wish to exchange ideas. Certainly, quantifying knowledge, or as Ms. Unna put it, "encapsulating the strengths and weaknesses of a student into one number", is an evil practice indeed. But getting a low grade has never made me limit my scope of learning.

Regarding the Pass/Fail system: it resembles a politically correct-squeamish sort of gesture of getting a pat on the back, if one has done the minimum work required. How can such a system possibly encourage excellence?

Lastly, most under-graduates I have met here at McGill in the last seven years displayed a far higher degree of "creativity" and "risk-taking" and "imagination" than my fellow grad students, who, ironically, once they've completed their required course work, do not have the incentive of getting good grades to spur them on, or have simply lost their lustre as a result of prolonged contact with academia.

Perhaps McGill should go back to the British system that was abolished in late 60's/early 70's and replaced by the present American credit system?

Milica Krivokapic
M.A. History

Comments wanted on Pass/Fail

To the Daily:

As explained in Elisabeth Unna's article "Students propose Pass/Fail option at McGill" (Jan. 20), a Working Group is presently being formed to study the possibility of an optional Pass/Fail grading system for elective courses. According to the student proposal, undergraduates would have the option during Drop/Add to designate one elective course (per year) as Pass/Fail. This would mean that the final percentage grade calculated by the professor in that course would be converted into a Pass or a Fail on transcripts and would not enter into the G.P.A. In this way, students would be able to take electives in any field of interest without being concerned by the potential effect on their G.P.A.

If you have any comments or concerns about this proposal which you

would like to have considered by the Working Group or, if you would like more information, please leave a note at the Students' Society general office.

Bryan Good
Science Senator
Science, U3

Leave Kermit alone

To the Daily:

I must say that I agree in essence with the comment of Thursday, January 21. Bill Clinton, in the short time he has had since being elected has given America little to be hopeful for. Unfortunately I have to take issue with your treatment of Kermit the frog.

Kermit the frog represents Sesame Street. Sesame Street is one of the finest and most responsible television programs of the medium's short history. Now being watched by a second generation of Americans, it has been, and, indeed, continues, to be an innovative force in education. It teaches spelling, arithmetic, and language. Above all, it teaches tolerance. It teaches tolerance of people of other races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and disabilities. It has done all of this and remained entertaining.

If you wish to criticize Bill Clinton, base it on his broken campaign promises. Or base it on his cabinet, which has proven itself to be less diverse and less ethical than that of George Bush and his evil Republicans. Perhaps singing with Kermit the frog was an empty gesture, but claiming that Kermit has no "real" significance is simply false. Let us not forget that Kermit has been singing longer than Bill Clinton has held an elected office. And that's a long time.

Michael Fleischer
U3 Engineering

The Breeders Reply

To the Daily:

Likewise read your comment on Love, and it was so fuckin' excellent. It's just like what happened to us!

We had a relationship, like he was the guy, and she was the girl, and it was so fuckin' stupid. And suddenly we go, "What the fuck in goin' on?"

I swear every time we had a conversation, we were talkin' about his dick! And she tried to change him on the

football field just like you said. We was gonna get married, but suddenly we figured out we was white and heterosexual - and we didn't wanna bring any more of those into the world!

After this journey, we're mature like you. So we thank you for describing your personal love-life in the newspaper.

Neal Colgrass, Arts U3
Madelyn Kent, Arts U3

P.S. Are you lonely? For a good time call 555-2312.

Confusion in health services

To the Daily:

At the age of nine, I had an Electroencephalograph indicating poor bilateral driving response; much theta activity; diffused cerebral activity with alpha activities consisting of irregular 8-9c/waves. I was born prematurely at the seventh month of gestation. I always had great difficulty with perceptual motor fine skills and processing information. Nevertheless, I made it to McGill, and now I am completing my Masters Degree in Educational Studies.

I was placed on probation at McGill. Once, upon asking Dr. Fiona Key in 1983 and 1990, "Fiona, is there something that I should know (because I have great difficulty reading)" she said to me, "No, there is nothing interesting that you will find. If you have difficulty reading then you should not be in university." Well, if she had told me at the time then I could have received some assistance with regard to my learning disabilities.

Surprisingly, legal aid at Concordia University said, "Well, I do not see why you want to see your medical reports because they are not legal documents." I did receive some sort of assistance from "The Learning Disabled Center at Concordia University," "Well, if you have a grade point average of 3.5 then I don't think that you have that much difficulty with learning disabilities." Well, here I am applying again at McGill. Would it be any different?

When it comes to learning disabilities and neurological soft signs, you will find eight doctors contradicting each other. It seems they have real problems among themselves; perhaps, they should all seek professional consultation.

Tony

letters...

Grades encourage excellence

re: Making the Grade, Jan. 20, 1993

To the Daily:

As a graduate student at McGill (and a Teaching Assistant for 3.5 years), I must say I find it rather sad that Ms. Unna should feel such cynicism towards our grading system. But more than that, I find it rather pitiful that she should be able to make statements such as "the difficulty and work commitment don't matter, cuz I'm really interested in the

material. I swear."

If there is no such thing as commitment, then why bother going to McGill? If you're not interested in the material, you shouldn't be taking the course, should you?

As a Teaching Assistant, I have come to realize that most bad grades are the result of students' not having read the required and essential material, or of their inability to write well. In my experience, "competition" has never been



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Tocqueville said that in America, "anything which in any way transcends the people seems an obstacle to their desires, and they are tired by the sight of any superiority, however legitimate."

Tocqueville was able to say that because he never waded through 250 000 fans, all dedicated to seeing a bonified political star. He thought "Equality" in America made people hate the successful, but any rock 'n roll crowd worth its weight in trampled bodies today will crush fences just to glimpse a face.

AND CRUSH a fence we did.

I had come to Washington for Clinton's inauguration with 50 other political sport fans from McGill. And six of us had pushed as far as we could go toward the Capitol without a special ticket.

We watched big stars like Robert DeNiro and Sidney Poitier pass us through security while "Fanfare for the Common Man" played over the speaker system. But after a while, a few people got fed up with being more common than others, and charged the fence.

For a few seconds they ran around like rats in the empty security zone in front of us. And when they were about to be arrested, the whole crowd decided *en masse* to annihilate the fence and push up against the next barrier, 30 yards away.

We still couldn't see the inaugural platform, but we had done our rock 'n roll duty. The twist on all this, of course, is that Clinton is a star "Of the People," a "Jacksonian" who would sit down and "have donuts with you," as a woman from Arkansas told me.

That's why our portion of the crowd kept doing the wave and blindly raising their cameras at every black car that went by - because the newly named "William Jefferson" Clinton was just like us.

"Kenn...uh...Clinton!"

SUDDENLY a mysterious voice came over the speakers. "Ladies and gentlemen," it crackled. "The President of the United States, accompanied by Vice-President Quayle!"

We all booed. Then we struck up "Nah-nah, nah-nah-nah-nah, hey hey hey, goodbye!" That meant Bush was still a star, but no longer "of the people." That may be because the

people are paying him \$150 000 a year now to do nothing, \$1.5 million to set up a new business, \$150 000 for "staff," \$46 000 for staff "benefits," \$46 000 for travel, and \$80 000 for "other."

Then we had to sit through some more band music before the next part of the show. Everything was well-arranged, with long pauses, musical interludes, and carefully arranged tiers of excitement. There were even build-ups that led to anti-climaxes, so we'd have to get ourselves excited all over again.

Reverend Billy Graham was one of those let-downs.

"Shall we pray," he said. He told us that we had a lot of good "spiritual foundations," but then told God that everyone in the crowd had sinned against Him. That was why we were "reaping the whirlwinds of crime, drug abuse, racism, immorality, and social injustice. We need to repent our sins and turn by faith to You."

"And now," he went on, "on this twentieth day of January, 1993, we commit to you, President-Elect Kenn...Uh...Clinton! Vice-President-Elect Gore..."

That got a big laugh. "Jeff — Jack — Kenn... Clinton!" someone said. "That's it!"

Finally, Graham prayed in the name of the "Prince of Peace" and let it go at that.

The next stop was the man himself.

Inaugural addresses are historically fine opportunities to get speech-writers to make up a really great line. FDR had "The only thing to fear is fear itself," and JFK had "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." And the in-between lines can be good enough to whip us all up into a violent frenzy for the big lines. But Clinton just had "CHANGE."

He had ear-bending platitudes. "To renew America we must be bold," he said. "Now we must do the work the season demands. Let us work until our work is done."

Apparently he was told to keep his politics as macro as possible, but he ended up skirting galactic. We all cheered at a few of his less specific ideas, and periodically someone would call out "Yeah! Yeah..."

Why they didn't have vendors walking around with hot dogs and popcorn I have no idea.

"Important? Are you kidding?"

THE CROWD scene afterward was terrible. The inaugural fans ran smack into the parade fans, and we all got squished into a corner around Third Street and Constitution Avenue. We slid along a field of mud and picked our way between brambly tree branches.

"I shoulda voted for Perot," one guy said, pressed up against a wall of people.

For some reason the police wouldn't let us cross the street which had been cleared for the parade, so, just like a crowd, we all started to act on a single idea. "We wanna cross!" we yelled. "We wanna cross!" And we tried to crush everybody in front of us.

That's when a McGill student beside me started to cry. So I took her by the hand and divided the crowd by saying I had a "sick person" coming up behind them.

We escaped into the free air of the street, where a few medics looked her over and told her to pretend that none of "these other people" were here. Then the medics told us we could just walk right up the open street.

Bill Clinton's Gala Touchdown

by Neal Colgrass

As we walked along, arm-in-arm, the crowd started to salivate. They didn't want to knock us down, as Tocqueville would have it — they just wanted to know if they should be going crazy or not.

Finally one guy yelled out, "Hey, are you guys important?"

I smiled and said, "Important? Are you kidding?"

They all cheered and waved their little flags.

Ball-hopping

LATER ON I stood on my tippy-toes for an hour to see Clinton go by in the parade. Above me, on the roof of the Labor Building, I could see a row of black baseball caps. Beside me a woman kept saying, "Grassy knoll, grassy knoll."

Apparently Clinton was thinking the same thing, because he drove by in a black limo with tinted windows. I vaguely saw a hand going back and forth behind the glass.

That night Bill went ball-hopping. I saw people all over town in their tuxes with little silver saxophone pins, and I heard about the Tennessee Ball and the MTV Ball.

Apparently the TV networks were only allowed to cover the "news" portions of the evening, because the Inaugural Committee had sold the "entertainment" rights (like Bill playing "Your Mamma Don't Dance And Your Daddy Don't Rock and Roll" on the sax) to Home Box Office for an unknown sum.

One big part of the evening's festivities was the launch of Bill's brother Roger's music career. He took the stage at the MTV Ball with his band, Politics. Word had it that Roger had already signed a \$200 000 contract with Atlantic records and was looking to sell a book about his unhappy childhood.

*"Are they armed?" I asked.
"No, we're not armed.
We're only armed with
Jesus Christ."*

"Oh sorry. It's your wife who died."

NEXT MORNING, the party was over. I bought myself a T-shirt of Clinton's cat, Socks, that said THE COOL CAT COMES TO WASHINGTON.

I heard that Cool Cat was having an open house in his new palatial residence, so I walked across town

toward the White House.

On my way I encountered what amounted to a fetus cemetery called "Cemetery for the Innocents." Rows and rows of white crosses were bound in by a plastic fence.

A large black man wearing a headset/microphone stood by the entrance.

"I'm Reverend Musgrove," he told me. "I'm with Save the Seed ministries, which means *save all these seeds of God*."

I asked him why he was wearing a headset, and he explained that it connected him to a nearby bus full of ex-cons who had found Jesus.

"Are they armed?" I asked.

"No, we're not armed. We're only armed with Jesus Christ."

I kept going. By the time I got to the White House, everyone who'd won tickets to get inside had already gone through. The only people remaining were the "Arkansas Contingent," a group of roughly 20 finely-dressed individuals who had been granted a private audience with the President.

Not since the time of Andrew Jackson, in the 1830s, had the president opened his home to the masses. They had quite a cleaning bill 160 years ago, but this time it was more peaceful, more refined.

All this called to mind a story I'd read about Jackson meeting a crowd in Ohio. He was mourning over the death of his wife at the time, and when he got off his boat someone shouted, "I thought you were dead! Oh sorry. It's your wife who died."

It's quite a gross story, but I like how the man felt familiar enough with the President to treat him like shit. The President had not played the saxophone on television, he was

not "young" and charming, and his friends hadn't given him \$25 million to throw an inaugural party. He just wasn't a star.

Thinking about this, I took a walk by the Smithsonian, where I found a bizarre statue commemorating the 50th anniversary of the boy scouts. It portrayed a naked man, a scantily dressed woman holding up a gold phallic snake, and a young boy scout walking in front of them with a stick, smiling.

Toronto police carry new weapon

BY MICHELLE ARRUDA

TORONTO (CUP) — Imagine how terrifying it would be if someone had the power to completely incapacitate you. Within seconds you would be on the ground, in a fetal position, unable to move or breathe without excruciating pain. A pain so terrible the only relief would be death. You'd promise or confess anything in the hope this pain would disappear.

Starting this month, more than 17 000 uniformed police across Ontario will have that power. They will be armed with a new debilitating weapon called pepper spray. The provincial government prohibited officers from using choke holds during arrests years ago "because the results can be well in excess of what was intended," Solicitor-General Allen Pilkey told the *Toronto Star*. Yet they will be adding pepper spray to the police arsenal.

The spray, Oleoresin Capsicum, is derived from the cayenne pepper plant. It has been used in various forms for over 200 years in countries such as India.

Sher Singh, a Guelph lawyer, remembers growing up in India fearing the spray police used. His friends and acquaintances were attacked with pepper spray, which was and still is illegal in India.

"I had no problem meeting an officer with a gun," he said in a telephone interview last month. "If they killed [or injured] me, they would have to explain it. But with pepper spray, there is more pain than with anything else in the world, and more importantly there is no accountability."

Singh knows all too well the damage that occurs when the pepper enters through the eyes, nose, or anus. In fact, some police have been known to first cut the skin with a knife and then spray pepper into the wound.

It is the ultimate form of torture — no bruises, no physical scars, only the suspect's word against the word of the police.

Metro Toronto Police Chief William McCormack told the *Star* he believes pepper spray is a "medically



harmless incapacitant which reduces the incidence of more physical force."

He said Ontario needs the spray to "serve the public requirement for greater police restraint, while also giving the police a valuable tool."

His statement is hardly reassuring when even the Solicitor-General's office admits there is "virtually no medical research available" on the effects of pepper spray.

But Singh says he has talked to doctors and psychiatrists about the terrifying effects of the spray. If it is sprayed into the face from five to 10 feet, within seconds the victim drops into the fetal position (not to the knees, as previously suggested in police reports), experiencing extreme irritation to the eyes, mucus membranes, and skin. Breathing becomes almost impossible, as the victim fights against pain which has been described as worse than having acid thrown in the face.

Alan Pilkey, Ontario's Solicitor-General, acknowledges that he has seen no research done on human reactions to the spray.

Admissions such as this really frighten pepper spray opponents like Mark Doland, a prison guard at

Guelph Penitentiary, who asked in a recent interview: "What happens if the subject sprayed has a weak heart or abnormal blood pressure?"

Not to mention the problems surrounding the psychological trauma of being sprayed — humiliation, terror of not being able to move, claustrophobia. Opponents to the spray are concerned about the lack of knowledge and training given to officers. Police are being told how they must react to potentially dangerous situations, yet no one really knows what should be done after a subject has been sprayed.

The police are constantly criticized for their actions by a public with the luxury of hindsight on their side. Remembering that police often have a split-second reaction time under conditions of danger and fear, it's fair to say that pepper spray increases the "real delay" between action and reaction. Officers are forced to ask themselves which weapon to use — gun, baton or spray.

Mike Sales, spokesperson for McCormack, acknowledges some officers are hesitant to carry the spray. The officers fear the repercussions from community groups that could result from using it. But he says the officers will have to get used to it.

"We are confident the force will ultimately adapt," he said. "To criticize is one thing, to disobey is another."

Police across Ontario spent much of last year protesting new provincial rules which would require them to fill out a form after firing their guns. Pepper spray opponents fear the spray could be used by officers to circumvent any controls.

Star editor Harold Levy investigated the spray last year. He came to the conclusion it will allow police to exercise violent power without public control.

In a recent interview, Levy described the spray as a tool for enforcing inequality.

"It gives police almost unlimited power to inflict unbearable pain against minorities, the poor, the young, the homeless, natives and other vulnerable people who may not show respect."

Educators call for end to military ban on gays

NEW YORK (CPS/CUP) — Some 125 educational leaders and institutions have signed an American Civil Liberties Union resolution calling for an end to the U.S. military ban of gays and lesbians in the armed forces.

The endorsements, publicized in two full-page ads in *The New York Times* last month, were gathered as part of the ACLU's plan to end the military discrimination against lesbians and gays in the military. Both ads were funded by grants from the David Geffen Foundation.

Among the 31 institutions signing the resolution were the

universities of Georgia, Kansas, Oregon, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. The presidents of Harvard, Yale and Princeton universities also signed the resolution, as did the presidents of Oregon State University, Arizona State, the State University System of New York, the University of Montana and Michigan State University.

Educational organizations including the American Council on Education, the American Association of University Professors and the National Education Association also gave support.

Low AIDS awareness on reserves risks Natives: study

TORONTO (CUP) — An AIDS and lifestyle survey of Ontario Natives conducted by the University of Toronto and Native groups has found an alarmingly low awareness of the disease among Natives.

Published this month, the report found that 71 per cent of Ontario Natives were certain they would never get AIDS, although only 15 per cent of the men said they used condoms consistently.

Knowledge of AIDS and its prevention was lowest in the north, where 45 per cent of Natives had never heard of AIDS, compared to 17 per cent throughout the province.

"The findings suggest that the population of this study does have less knowledge of AIDS than the general population," said Ted Myers, an associate professor at U of T's Department of Health Administration and director of the study.

The two-year, \$400 000 study is composed of 658 interviews with residents from 11 reserves throughout Ontario. It was a collaboration between the University, individual Native treaty organizations, band councils, and health workers.

Myers said the results have raised concern over the potential for widespread transmission of AIDS in remote Native communities.

"As long as people have multiple sex partners, and safe sex is not being practised, then the potential for the spread of the virus is there," he told reporters at a news conference.

Myers estimated that 212 people living on reserves have been infected with HIV — the virus that causes AIDS. However, because many natives have not been tested for HIV, the numbers could be a lot higher, he said.

"Less than half a per cent reported that they were HIV antibody positive," he said. "But in a population of 45 000, the number is not small."

Allan Roy, a director with the Chiefs of Ontario, says low awareness of AIDS in northern Native communities could be the result of having educational literature available only in English, and not in Ojibwa or Cree.

"As a result, many consider it a white man's disease, and part of a

lifestyle of western society," he said.

Cathryn George, health director for the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, said she hopes the results of the study will pressure the government to act on its plans to develop "culturally sensitive" AIDS education programs for Native people.

"Our people are more concerned now because everything is documented. Our behaviour has to change and that doesn't happen overnight."

Roy says it will be a challenge to keep AIDS out of Native communities. However, he says the first step have already been taken by the researchers who were involved in the study.

Praising them for their "pioneer" approach, Roy said they went back to each community they studied and explained the results.

George said that was a welcome change.

"This report is different. In the past we've had researchers show up in our communities and never return with their findings, which are used in part to stigmatize the lifestyle of a proud people," she said.

Roy was also pleased with the success of the research collaboration between U of T and the Native organizations.

Although it's not the first time a university has worked with Native groups, he says it's one of the most successful.

"We had a chance to add aboriginal comments — our interpretations and perspectives — to the report every step of the way. It really represents a model for not only future activities at U of T, but possibly to other universities in Canada," Roy said.

Myers said the study is an example of the need for further cross-cultural research. He commends the university for its initiative in participating in the project, but he believes that other universities should become involved as well.

"There needs to be more university support of faculty involvement in cross-cultural and community-based research because it's more time-consuming. But the need for this research must first be understood, and not all faculties have that understanding."

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Confused or Curious? IBGM (Lesbians, Bisexuals, Gays of McGill) has restarted peer counselling. Anyone interested in IBGM and/or finding out about their sexuality can drop by Shatner Room 417, or call 398-6822. Hours are 7 to 10, Monday through Friday. We're here for you!

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